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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: March 17, 1953

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY: [Signature] DATE: 3/11/53
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SUBJECT: Developments in Regard to Albania.

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Adam Watson, British Embassy
EE - Mr. Leverich
EE - Mr. Becknagel

COPIES TO: EUR - Mr. Bonbright (2)
EE - Mr. Barbour
WE - Mr. Knight
SP - Mr. Ferguson/Mr. Gullion
GTI - Mr. Dixon
BNA - Mr. Ladd

RA - Mr. Adair/Mr. Wolf
Amembassy, Belgrade
" , Athens
" , Rome
" , London
" , Paris

Mr. Watson of the British Embassy, who has just returned from a three week vacation, called today at his own request to discuss latest developments in regard to Albania. Mr. Leverich briefly outlined events of the past three weeks mentioning particularly the flurry of activity arising out of the reports, largely emanating from Belgrade, to the effect that there has been serious unrest in Albania coincident with Stalin's death, and the reports, mainly from Italian sources, of recent Yugoslav troop movements along the Albanian border.

He pointed out that we have no confirmation of these rumors, but that the Italians, have indicated great concern over them.

Mr. Leverich requested Mr. Watson to be sure to keep the Department advised of any indication that he might receive as to whether the

Italians had

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Italians had raised this matter in any way with the British Government and also anything he might be able to pass along concerning any discussion of Albania with Tito during the latter's visit to London.

(b)(6) [Mr. Watson] thought in view of these recent developments it might be well to get on with the talks with the French. Mr. Leverich said that although there had been some feeling within the Department that these talks should be postponed until after the Italian elections in early June, that he was not sure this reason would be controlling in the light of present developments. [Mr. Watson] expressed the opinion that it was difficult to see why the Italians should feel the fact that these talks were being held would particularly reflect upon the Italian elections. He felt the clear assertion that we are seeking the complete independence of Albania and not planning any division of Albania among the neighboring powers should deprive the matter of especial significance as a current domestic political issue.

(b)(6) [Mr. Watson] concluded the discussion concerning joint US-UK- French talks on Albania with the statement that the British Government, while not absolutely insistent upon it, felt that it was highly desirable that these talks should take place without further delay.

EUR:EE:TM:acknagel:baa
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